

# IndyCar Media Conference

Monday April 23, 2018

## Ryan Hunter-Reay James Hinchcliffe

### Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** We will welcome in Ryan Hunter-Reay, who finished second in today's Honda Indy Grand Prix of Alabama. A two-time winner here, Ryan, really close, again, to that top step. Obviously, a very eventful race, shredding it out over two days. How did you guys work your way up to the front?

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** It was tough. Today it looked like the weather was clear. So the meteorologists are fired for sure. We thought it was going to be a nice dry race and ended up a little bit of a curveball at the end there.

So the challenge to begin the race was dealing with trying to get the fuel number, trying to make it on one stop. That was difficult for sure. And then toward the end, you know, with the rain coming, I could see the clouds coming, the moisture starting to accumulate on the visor, sliding around a little bit. The key there was trying to pit at the right time, not too early to where you burn the fronts off and not too late to where you'd be sliding around too much on slick.

I think Newgarden was right on the cusp. Had it gone another three or four laps, he might have been in trouble with the time he pitted because it was still a little bit dry when he took his rains.

We were coming there at the end. I think we had really good rain pace, catching Newgarden by a bunch every lap, but just a little too late. All in all, a good weekend. Drama free for us, so nice.

**THE MODERATOR:** Seemed like there was a lot of strategies playing out throughout the race. People trying to work their way to the front however they could. Waiting for tires, getting tires early. Ultimately, why did you guys land on the strategy you chose?

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** It was kind of wait and see. You kind of had to react. What kind of fuel consumption do we have on lap one, two, three, four, once you settle into a rhythm. From there, are there any yellows? Is this going to be reachable to do it in one? That's where those guys really earn the money on the timing. There's a whole lot of math going on. I'm just in the car getting the number that I'm told to get. It is tricky at times, but certainly they had a lot of stress today trying to make that happen.

Can you ask me some questions?

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** Ryan, how nervous were you with the No. 5 car breathing down your neck?

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** It was terrible. I was like why is he going so fast? We're saving fuel.

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** Did you pee yourself?

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** I didn't.

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** Not today. I was covered in a different yellow liquid, but that was after the race.

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** We thought you were popular on Dancing With the Stars. You've taken a whole other level now.

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** I joked with Robin Miller this morning that it was the piss heard round the world because it was literally picked up by more.

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** No doubt, man. Good on you, brother.

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** My phone was blowing up. I did not expect that at all. Oh, hi. I forgot this was actual.

(No microphone.)

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** Yeah, yeah, guy's like a sprinkler.

**THE MODERATOR:** Did you think we're safe for this press conference?

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** You should start a movement, something where people piss their pants on road trips and take pictures. What would you call it?

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** If kids are willing to eat Tide Pods, they'll pee themselves in a road car. That's not a problem.

**RYAN HUNTER-REAY:** What would you hash tag it?

**JAMES HINCHCLIFFE:** #GrandPee. Instead of #GrandPrix, #GrandPee.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: We'll get back to you.

THE MODERATOR: No need to make serious decisions such as these right now. Let's think on it.

James, let's formally welcome you in. A new career best finish for you here at Barber Motorsports Park, finishing third in today's Honda Indy Grand Prix of Alabama, but an eventful race, one that was spread over two days, obviously. Your thoughts on the race and ultimately a new podium finish for you here at Barber.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: It's great to finally get on the podium here. I feel like we kind of always flirt with it every year. The track, I've got a decent history at, but it's like that fifth, sixth, seventh range.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Hinchtown Hose Me Down, something like that.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Nice, but it looks like you're peeing on somebody else. Hose it down? Hinchtown Hose It Down. We'll work on that. That's good though.

It was nice to finally get up on the podium. Like I said, we've had some strong cars here in the past, just haven't been able to seal the deal. Man, what an eventful race. We started off kind of the odd guys out, in the top ten at least, starting on the Firestone Blacks. I think it was a solid call. The red started to go up at the end there.

We were able to get Alex coming in right behind Ryan. He was really good on the out lap. We didn't really have anything for him there.

Then the rain was coming. It was like a little bit. At first I didn't say anything. They can't do anything about it. Started raining a little bit more. Started raining a little bit. No, we see it. Started raining a little bit more. Rain tires? No, no, no, don't be crazy. Like a lap later, maybe you're not crazy. They made a great call on when to come in. I think it was a two-lap window. You had one of two laps to get in there and capitalize on it.

Huge credit to the SPM team. Two cars in the top ten in qualifying, two cars in the top five in the race. Huge congrats to Robbie, and obviously to Josef and Ryan as well for first and second, because that race had a little of everything. We had to keep guys on red tires behind us when we were on black for the start, and you had to not pit stop in the rain, when you had flicks on, when you had wets on -- just a little bit of everything.

Like I said, just part of the guys who had a terrible test here a few weeks ago, and to come back with this result, third and fourth in 15 cars, is great.

THE MODERATOR: So many things to think about and all the decisions you have to make. From a mentality

standpoint, going from a race one day to a race the very next, continuing that race, what does that do -- what goes on behind the scenes from a team standpoint there?

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: This one in particular was tough. The race ended obviously having only run in the wet. We were going back to the dry. We hadn't been in the dry since qualifying on Saturday. That's obviously a bit of a different car than you want for the race. Don't know what track conditions are going to be like. It was good of the Series to kind of give us the opportunity to work on the cars and do something. Make sure we get -- try and get our heads around it.

It was all kind of guesswork. Everybody kind of just took their best stab at it. Our predictions had rain at the beginning and dry at the end. When it started dry, we're like, oh, we're dry for the whole race. We're good. We didn't really have anything prepared on the car for any wet running.

But that's the risk you take, and that's the kind of game of roulette you play with Mother Nature every weekend. We did an all right job as a team and proud of that.

**Q. Ryan, you've had a rough start to the last two seasons, but you've come on later in the season. How does it feel going to the month of May with you're right in range in the points?**

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: Yeah, this is -- like I mentioned, this is the first weekend this year that we've had no issues, no drama. At St. Pete we had the electrical issue before the race, had to start from pit lane. At Phoenix, we had some type of fuel rig issue where we couldn't get all the fuel in the car. And then Long Beach was Long Beach. It was nice just to have a nice, straightforward weekend.

The team worked really hard. Like James said, we kind of rolled off the truck not happy, but we continued to work on the car. Made it better through the weekend, got into the Fast Six, moved up a few spots through the race, and got a bit of everything this weekend. Nice to have that momentum rolling into May.

My Southwest pilot texted me he's holding the plane.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Good job. Thanks, man.

RYAN HUNTER-REAY: You too.

JAMES HINCHCLIFFE: Does that mean me too? Sweet, cool. Thanks, guys. I wait until I'm dismissed.